



## State of Connecticut

### HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Date: 3/5/2014  
To: Transportation Committee  
From: Rep. Whit Betts  
Subject: Testimony Supporting SJR 23

Good morning to the Chairs and members of the Transportation Committee.

My name is Rep. Whit Betts from the 78<sup>th</sup> District and I am submitting my testimony for this public hearing to express my very strong support for:

S.J. No. 23 (COMM) RESOLUTION PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE STATE CONSTITUTION LIMITING THE USE OF MONEYS CONTAINED IN THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION FUND.

It is my understanding The Special Transportation Fund (STF) was established by the Connecticut General Assembly on July 1, 1984, to provide a dedicated fund for the financing of investment in the State's transportation system and to cover the cost of operating the Department of Transportation and all the services it provides.

The primary revenue source for the Special Transportation Fund comes from taxes imposed on gasoline, and most everyone in Ct. believes the billions of dollars collected since its inception is dedicated for transportation services and programs.

How wrong we all are!

In a story researched and written by CT Mirror's Keith Phaneuf, he reported that "Between 2005 and 2013, about \$1.27 billion raised by the state's wholesale gas tax has been spent on non-transportation programs."

Alas, he discovered that this "dedicated transportation fund" had been raided for over \$1 billion, and used for non-transportation purposes, such to help pay off deficits in the state budget.

And over the past 2 years almost \$200 million dollars was taken from the Special Transportation Fund and put in the General Fund to help balance our state budget.

These recent decisions were made despite several reports citing the poor conditions of our neglected roads and bridges, and inspite of the DOT Commissioner's report indicating that our state needed approximately \$3 billion in road and bridge repairs in our state.

We now know the reason why our roads and bridges repair program has fallen so far behind in its maintenance schedule – billions of dollars had been taken out of the dedicated fund created to avoid another Mianus Bridge collapse.

I know many – if not all – of the members of the Transportation Committee share the common conviction that revenue put into the Special Transportation Fund should be restricted to its original purpose of supporting transportation programs and service in Ct.

However, history has shown that past and present administrations routinely have transferred huge sums of money out this dedicated Fund, and that is why the so many of our roads and bridges are in such poor condition today.

For this reason I believe the best solution to stopping this practice is to make a change in our state constitution that is reflected in SJR 23.

I urge my colleagues to please approve this proposal and thereby prevent the transfer of any monies from the Special Transportation Fund by any future administration or legislature. Adopting and adhering to this change in our state constitution is a decision we need to make now, and common sense tells us this is the right path for us to follow.

Thank you again for the opportunity to express my very strong support for SJR 23.

Sincerely,



Whit Betts  
State Representative  
78<sup>th</sup> District